LOOP GROUP - SEPTEMBER 30, 1993

- HOW MY FAITH HAS CHANGED -

GREAT TOPIC

FAITH CHANGES -

IN FACT, WE KNOW FROM PSYCHOLOGY, BUT ALSO LISTENING TO OUR OWN EXPERIENCE THAT THE NATURE OF FAITH IS NOT STATIC - once given or learned - the rubrics (creeds etc.) can be learned but not faith

BUT A JOURNEY, A PILGRIMAGE

A MOVEMENT FROM HERE TO THERE (& vice versa)

WHICH REFLECTS DIFFERENT STAGES AND SITUATIONS IN LIFE

AND - THAT FAITH THAT DOESN'T CHANGE IS STUCK - SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST

FAITH that is not changing is NOT ONLY not A SOURCE OF ENERGY, JOY - BUT SOURCE OF DISCOMFORT - AWKWARDNESS

EXAMPLE

1) RELIGIOUS FAITH - DEVELOPED TO MID-CHILDHOOD AND then STOPPED WHILE OTHER INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED (PERSON DROPS OUT OF CHURCH - NO RELIGION AT HOME) common occurrence

2) BIBLICAL - simplistic LITERALISM AND SO WHEN CONFRONTED WITH REALITIES OF MODERN SCIENCE - CONCLUDES RELIGION IS INVALID.

3) THEOLOGICAL - GOD AS KIND, LOVING PROTECTOR AND THEN TRAGEDY HAPPENS -

RELIGION IS IRRELEVANT. - Russell Baker - Fa died at 6 - the dismisses God + religion

GOD THE PROTECTOR DIDN'T COME THROUGH - NO mature FAITH WHICH INCLUDES SENSE OF the tragic TRAGEDY.

Born

THERE IS A LOT OF WORK DONE ON TOPIC OF FAITH FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT. / How does faith happen / why do some have it /

KVM IS AN EXPERT

BEST CURRENT THINKER - JAMES FOWLER, PROF. OF THEOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AT EMORY UNIVERSITY

STAGES OF FAITH

BECOMING ADULT, BECOMING HUMAN

FOWLER USES ERIK ERIKSON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND STAGES - TO HELP UNDERSTAND FAITH

HIS PREMISE IS THAT FAITH FOLLOWS HUMAN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IF GIVEN A CHANCE

ERIKSON DEVELOPED 8 STAGES / EACH WITH ITS SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND TASKS

STAGE	TASK	THREAT
1. INFANCY	BASIC ~~TRUTH~~ TRUST	FEAR
2. TWO	AUTONOMY/SHAME/SELF-DOUBT) →	
3. OLDER PRE-SCHOOL	CONSCIENCE	GUILT
4. SCHOOL YEAR	INDUSTRY/COMPETITION COMPETENCE /	/ lack of
5. ADOLESCENCE	IDENTITY	
6. YOUNG ADULTHOOD	INTIMACY	
7. MIDDLE ADULTHOOD	GENERATIVITY/CARE	
8. OLD AGE	INTEGRITY	

OTHER APPROACHES INCLUDE DANIEL LEVINSON

SEASONS OF A MAN'S LIFE

FOUR BROAD SEASONS - 20 YR. SEGMENTS

CAROL GILLIGAN - IN A DIFFERENT VOICE, PSYCHOLOGICAL

THEORY AND WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FOCUSES ON

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

USING ERIKSON - HOW DOES FAITH EVOLVE/CHANGE?

INFANCY - BASIC TRUST - NURSERY NURSING CARE

EARLY CHILDHOOD - CONSCIENCE, RIGHT/WRONG

ADOLESCENCE - IDENTITY (IT'S WHY WE CONFIRM AND COMMISSION ADOLESCENTS)

Middle age your 'project' Older- parents of all generations

You don't - you don't want to grow up

SO YOUR FAITH HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE.

SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS -

MY JOURNEY

PARENTS - PRESBYTERIAN/METHODIST

BADC CLOSEST

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH -

RELIGIOUS ISSUES IMPORTANT, BUT NOT CRITICAL

S.S. WORSHIP, CONFIRMATION, CAMP, Y.F. AND BASKETBALL!

COLLEGE - SOME WORSHIP

OBLIGATORY CHAPEL - CURED ME FOREVER OF COERCED RELIGION

RELIGION COURSES - AN INTELLECTUAL HUNGER - TO U. OF C. DIV. SCHOOL (NOT SEMINARY) AND WHILE THERE DECIDED ON MINISTRY AS VOCATION

- My crisis - end of first year - Good Friday - sermon

TRANSITIONS

1. Faith change in respect to Scripture

2. - LITERALISM/FUNDAMENTALISM

- HIGHER AND HISTORIC/LITERARY CRITICISM

- WELL MEANING HUMANISM WITH BIBLE STORIES AS ILLUSTRATION

- REFORMED THEOLOGY OF THE WORD

Literalism - Fundamentalism

~~LITERATURE — FORMIDABLE~~

- NEVER AN ISSUE
- NEVER RAISED IN SS!
- IF IT'S IN BIBLE, IT'S TRUE

(PARENTS KNEW BETTER BUT NEVER THOUGHT THEY NEEDED TO TELL ME)

CRITICISM - COLLEGE

BIBLE SUBMITTED TO SAME ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE AS HISTORY AND LITERATURE

BIG TROUBLE IF YOU'RE LITERALIST

- GEOLOGY/BIOLOGY - BIG BANG vs. Genesis 1

  DARWIN - EVOLUTION

- SCIENTIFIC METHOD

  TEST TRUTH WITH SENSES + with human reason / logic

- HISTORY

  MOSES DIDN'T WRITE PENTATEUCH

  DAVID DIDN'T WRITE PSALMS

  SOME BATTLES DIDN'T HAPPEN OR GREATLY EXAGGERATED

- LITERATURE

  ISAIAH WRITTEN BY 3 WRITERS

  GENESIS 1 & 2 - TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STORIES

  JONAH AND WHALE - WHATEVER DOES THAT MEAN?

So to a Benign Humanism

What faith I had based on noble principles - Bible a kind of embarrassment used only to illustrate

and then serious study in Divinity School learned? - Israel has wonderful Poets, poetry Job NT -

I majored in N.T. - learned Greek

I have spent more time in Bible study than in anything else

Thesis on Matthew 16:13-20

word by word EXEGESIS

Reformed/Presbyterian position was never literalist

But the Word in the Bible

Bible contains God's word.

Curiously - Bible not as unhistorical as we first thought - not unreliable but not history

-It is ~~string~~ STORY of faith - God's people and God's love

Source of inspiration - ground of truth - measure of all things.

2. God and Science

trajectory

science as threat

science as sole truth

science as ~~testing~~ TESTIMONY to mystery &

a ~~comparison~~ COMPANION discipline to religion

Threat

the Evolution/Creation debate

The Scales

THE PHYSICAL LAWS VS. NATURE -MIRACLES

LACK OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

PURE RATIONALISM SEES NO VERIFIABLE EVIDENCE

GOD AS PROJECTION OF HUMAN INSECURITY.

Science as the Work → TRUTH

SO MAYBE ONLY TRUTH IS SCIENTIFIC TRUTH

THEN ~~THE~~ MYSTERY STARTED TO HAPPEN

LOVE - INTIMACY - BABIES

SCIENCE NOT BIG ENOUGH

RECENT EXPOSURE TO SCIENTISTS WHO ARE OPEN TO MYSTERY

STEVEN HAWKING

"TO KNOW GOD"

LEWIS THOMAS

SCIENCE IS TEACHING US WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

SO, I WELCOME SCIENCE AS TESTIMONY ~~TESTING~~ TO MYSTERY

3. SOCIAL ISSUES OF FAITH

FROM OPTIMISM TO PESSIMISM TO REALISM

60S OPTIMISM - A BETTER WORLD

RACE (CIVIL RIGHTS - INCREDIBLE OPTIMISM AND HOPE)

THEN PEACE

I WAS EARLY SUPPORTER OF Vietnam ---------- AS AN OBLIGATION TO FREEDOM LOVING FRIENDS.

11/22/63 WAS A SHOCK

68 - WORST YEAR

RFK, MLK, MY LAI

JOURNAL 12/3/69

FOUR EVENTS HAVE PUNCTURED MY IDEALISM AND REVEALED THE RESIDENT BEAST IN MAN

-ASSASSINATION OF JFK

- ASSASSINATION OF RFK

- ASSASSINATION OF MLK

- MASSACRE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN BY U.S. TROOPS

"A LOT OF DREAMS WERE SHATTERED. NO CAUSE IS WORTH WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT VIETNAMESE VILLAGE: NO AMOUNT OF MILITARY RHETORIC CAN ERASE WHAT HAPPENED. I HAVE ALWAYS FELT A DEEP LOVE FOR COUNTRY AND A CONFIDENCE IN ITS RIGHTNESS. NO MORE. NOW IT'S ALL DE-SPAIR AND LITTLE HOPE."

- AND THEN A REACQUAINTANCE WITH CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY -

WHICH KNOWS ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL - AND SEES HOPE

EVEN IN BAD TIMES

EASTER

~~EASTERN~~ FAITH

AND A NEW REALISM - BASED ON REALISTIC HOPE

4. FROM INNOCENCE AND CERTAINTY TO MYSTERY

CITE OLD MINISTER'S COMMENT AT MY ORDINATION EXAM

THE OLDER I GET, THE FEWER BELIEFS I HAVE AND THE MORE I BELIEVE THEM

SO, I'M MORE WILLING TO SAY -

"I DON'T KNOW" BECAUSE OF MY DEEPENING FAITH IN GOD

I'M LESS EXCLUSIVE AND MORE INCLUSIVE - WHEN IT COMES TO WHO IS IN AND NOT IN.

I'M WILLING TO LET GOD DECIDE WHO GETS IN HEAVEN...

SOMEONE WROTE ABOUT A SECOND INNOCENCE -

AFTER STRUGGLING WITH DOUBT

FAITH - A SECOND INNOCENT ACCEPTANCE

IN SPIRIT OF T. S. ELIOT LINES - MY FAVORITE:

"THE END OF ALL OUR EXPLORING

WILL BE TO ARRIVE WHERE WE STARTED

AND TO KNOW THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME."

September 27, 1993

Dr. John Buchanan
Pastor
Fourth Presbyterian Church

Dear Dr. Buchanan,

Thank you for agreeing to speak at the Loop Group Breakfast Series on September 30. We have had a successful series on the topic of redirecting outlooks as a result of change in our lives. We particularly look forward to your reflections on the experience of change in our spiritual lives.

On Thursday morning, breakfast will begin at 7:00, although you are welcome to arrive at 6:45 for coffee. We will make some short announcements at about 7:30, and Suzanne Blaustone will introduce you. I hope you will welcome questions after your prepared remarks. Our program will end at about 8:15 so that people can get to work. The Plaza Club is on the 40th floor of the original Prudential Building.

Please feel free to contact me (856-4113) or Nancy Hutchison if you have questions about the series. Again, we look forward to your remarks and thank you for supporting the Loop Group.

Jon Findley

Jon Findley
Chair
Loop Group Planning Committee